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THOUGHTS

— K
ON MEANS OF

ALLEVIATING THE MISERIES

ATTENDANT UPON

COMMON PROSTITUTION.

*Æque pauperibus prodest, locupletibus æquè ;
Æquè neglectum pueris senibusque nocebit.*

THOUGHTS



TO ALL MEN, *whose competency of understanding is animated by generosity of sentiment, particularly to ALL YOUNG MEN OF FORTUNE AND FASHION throughout this Metropolis, with a general esteem for that predominancy of good qualities which the characters of the majority display,*

The following Pages are earnestly dedicated, by

THE AUTHOR.

LONDON,
February 25, 1799.

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THE AUTHOR

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INTRODUCTION.

THE various evils with which great national opulence, and its sure attendant luxury, are constantly accompanied, are ever most strikingly exhibited within the precincts of large cities, and especially within the walls of a wide and magnificent metropolis. Wretchedness, in such a situation, is not only aggravated as to its appearance, in proportion to the splendor with which it is contrasted, but is also less easy to be made known and to be remedied than in the smaller divisions of society. The noise and hurry of pleasure and of avarice, in a great measure, destroy the inclination, as well as the leisure, of attending even to the loud call of complaining misery : much less admit of any disposition to search into its secret lurking-place, where shame, that sharpens every pang, has driven it to encounter the many untold horrors of concealment.

Of those who never tell their grief, but whose secret afflictions exceed, beyond calculation or expression, all miseries to which the hand of charity has ever been extended, the most unfriended and

most wretched are those unhappy females whose ultimate resource, for the support of a hateful existence, has procured them the degrading appellation of Girls or Women of the Town. The very title seems to level them with the pavement on which they wander : they are a property equally regarded as common, equally base, equally to be trampled on. It is the wish of my heart, and my sole aim, on this occasion, to excite, in some of those for whose enjoyment the fairest flowers of prostitution have been torn from their abodes of native innocence and exposed at public market, a disposition to reflect on, and to take some small pains to alleviate the most clearly ascertainable calamities of which that mart has been the origin.

These weak outcasts have, on several accounts, peculiar claim to our serious consideration and compassion. Hard must be the heart of that man who can reflect without emotion on the situations in life from which many have been drawn ; on the various means of cruelty and treacherous subtlety employed to seduce or drag them thence ; or on their present miserable state ; in which, for ever excluded from all commerce with the virtuous of their own sex, morally dead in the eyes of all their relations, who hold even their memory in abhorrence ; spurned at by the friends of their youth, abandoned by those in whom they trusted, and agonizing under the tortures of shame and of remorse, they are finally driven by the instant pres-

sure of hunger, the unallayable necessity of cloathing, fire, and lodging, to encounter all the shocking reverses of exposure to the merciless brutality of a lustful and licentious multitude.

What language can describe the horrors inflicted by the oppressions and infinitely various cruelties of those monsters in human shape at whose houses they commonly are lodged ! the uncertainty of procuring sustenance from day to day ; the terrors of debt and of imprisonment ; the total want of friends in whom to confide, and the consequent inability to provide against future seasons of distress, when disease or age shall have disabled them from procuring even their present precarious livelihood ; but above all, the nauseating insults of the numbers whose debilitated appetite, whose capricious and depraved desires, must be excited by the utter rejection of all delicacy and unceasingly diversified exertions of sensual ingenuity ! Yet these are but a few of the sources of that complicated misery which a large portion of these unhappy women labour to dispel, but certainly aggravate, by a gradually increasing application to strong liquors. These hasten on a premature old age, and thus blast, even to annihilation, every trace of that beauty on which alone all their hopes of sustenance depend.

To enter into a minute description of these various scenes of want, filth, sickness, brutality, and anguish, would be to exhibit a detail so disgusting and indelicate that it would serve only to

excite horror in the minds of the virtuous and decent, and even nausea in those who have been most inured to the reality. Hogarth, in both his "Rake's and Harlot's Progress," alludes to them in various instances, but always with a light and cautious pencil, judiciously deeming a farther display to be incompatible with the decorum of moral painting. In Dr. Dodd's novel, called "The Sisters," the description of these miseries is variously shocking, yet, revolting as it is to humanity, affords, I am persuaded, but a faint representation of the horrors, innumerably multiplied, that actually exist.*

In order, however, to form an accurate idea of the several species of relief which these unfortunate beings, at different times and in different circumstances, require; it will be necessary to point out distinctly the several downward stages of wretchedness and degradation into which all are inevitably plunged, except those, most happy! whose fortunate debility of body has yielded to the first shock of misery, and found the best remedy in early death.

* Vide Appendix, No. I.

FIRST STAGE OF MISERY.

THE first period of unhappiness commences from the instant a poor girl has yielded to the art of her seducer, when her soul, exhausted with the conflict of passion, is suddenly alarmed with terrors of detection. Every thing and every person wears a new and terrible aspect. Every eye seems strained to scrutinize, every frown to reproach, every smile to taunt her. The amusements of youth are from that moment all at once forsaken. In hurried intervals of terror and remorse she searches for every object that once awakened her heart to happiness, that contributed to render her native place, her home, dear to her. Regret is now alone excited. A black presentiment of being soon torn—hurled from them for ever, occupies her mind. Her usual attention to family duties is unaccountably suspended. Absence of thought, a moping stupor, and a love of solitude succeed to active cheerfulness; paleness, to the glow of health; and silence, to the song of hilarity. Her altered manner, neglectfulness, and awkwardness incur continual reproaches. Should her

sickly mien call forth paternal or fraternal tenderness ; alas ! their endearments are a thousand times more cutting, more heart-rending, than their anger. She regards all claim to kindness as for ever forfeited. Every word of affection, every glance of anxious love, but rouse her to anticipate the voice of thunder, and the frown of rage and horror which shall pronounce her an alien to the house, shall stun her with the name of infamous, shall drive her to become a wandering outcast over a world which she regards, with vague ideas of torturing apprehension, as an obscure hell ; of whose miseries her notions, however terrible, are as yet inadequate, from inability to particularize the scenes of horror into which she is about to be precipitated.

The agitations of shame and terror drive sleep from her pillow, produce languor and debility of limbs, bring on nervous fever, with all its miserable train of dejection, tremor and vertigo, the precursors of delirium. The skin is parched, the altered blood seems to corrode the veins, the tongue is hardened, the eyes dried in their sockets. The symptoms of advancing pregnancy redouble all her agonies. Is it to be wondered at, that, in such a state, the mental faculties, the energies of the heart, display symptoms of disease. All woman's nature seems deranged in her. Every idea is strained towards one object, with which her whole soul is convulsed—the concealment of her shame.

It is not possible to calculate the numbers who,

thus circumstanced in mind and body, greedily accept and swallow the medicines in vulgar repute for procuring abortion. The ignorant administrators of these baleful drugs destroy the mother, perhaps, not less frequently than the embryo. This hazard, though often foreseen, is willingly encountered. It happens, however, not uncommonly, that, from a similarity of drugs, an innoxious medicine is administered. The deluded wretch has added to her former miseries the horror of disappointment with the terrible consciousness of crime.

Terror is now swoln into the ferocity of despair. Her natural form and the arrangement of her dress may perhaps disguise the outward signs of her progress in pregnancy. She derives a strength and courage from despair, which enable her to contend against the sickness and exhaustion of strength that necessarily accompany the approaching period of travail. In the solitude of night, unsupported in the hour of acutest pain, she disburthens herself of that Being whose growth has been the progress of her misery. The innocent cause of her unhappiness is yet an object of affection. The extremes of love and of fear are mingled in the wild stare with which she awhile regards it. Tears, long strangers to her eyes, now gush forth as from a newly opened fountain, while she folds the babe in her embraces. At this instant its shrill cry calls back the whole tempest of her alarms. In the precipitancy of dismay she rolls it in the bed-clothes, to still the fatal sound

that threatens to frustrate all her torturing labours, to betray her to the ignominy which she regards with terror bordering on madness. In her frenzy she heaps blankets and pillows over the struggling infant, and sinks fainting, breathless, senseless on the spot of her exertion. Oh ! could she but die at that moment ! To what a scene must she revive ? With feeble limbs, and a faint recollection of the past, she searches amidst the heap on which she fell. The child is dead.—She—its mother—is its murderer.—Oh, horror !

—Can any act committed under such circumstances be said to be influenced by malicious intention ? by that deliberate malignancy of resolution which forms the distinguishing characteristic of crime ? What intention can exist ? What reason can retain so firm a seat as to possess its governance at such a moment ? Let the chronicles of death be examined. This moment of horror is no fancied picture ; no exaggerated detail of misery : it is a daily occurrence. One man or woman tells another that it has happened : and they proceed in any amusement as cheerfully as after hearing the most trivial, unaffecting story.

What becomes of the miserable mother ? a few common facts will best answer this question.

Lucy ——— wrapped the body of her child in a sheet, and endeavoured to hide it in the garden. She recomposed her appearance as well as possible ; and strove to perform the duties of the day. The sheet was missed, and the place of its deposit soon

discovered. Continual swoonings betrayed the unhappy Lucy ; who, as soon as she acquired sufficient power of utterance, confessed every thing. Lucy was hanged by the side of a hideous ruffian, stained with every crime, and guilty of deliberate murder, attended with circumstances of unexampled cruelty.

The history of Maria ——— was not less pitiable. She was the loveliest girl in the whole village ;—nay, the country could not boast of one more fair, more modest, more engaging in her manner : her education was the best the country could give ; her virtues were the theme of the old, the pattern and envy of the young. She was advanced above the usual elevation of domestics in the 'Squire's family. * * * * *

* * * * *
From what prospects of rural ease ! with what excruciating torment of soul must that poor girl have fallen ! into what an abyss of misery ! She contrived to deliver herself secretly of a child (probably still-born) ; she crawled to the window of her chamber ; leapt into the moat beneath. The next day, the news of Maria's death suspended all the labour of the village. A sobbing multitude thronged to the Court-gates to hear the result of the Coroner's inquest. It was a slight mitigation of the severest grief ever felt by every inhabitant of ——— to hear that a humane Jury had pronounced Maria lunatic, and saved her body, lovely even in death, from ignominious impalement : and had

rescued her memory from imputation of murder, by declaring the child to have been dead before birth.

A young woman lately presented herself for admittance into the ——— Hospital (where lying-in patients are not usually received). She had persuaded the lady with whom she had lived several years, and whom she had served with affectionate fidelity, that her case was dropsical. It was agreed, that when she grew better, she should return to her place. The physicians had no doubt of her pregnancy, and supposed her within a few weeks of her time. She was exhorted, entreated to declare the truth; warned of the imminent danger of leading them to a misconstruction of her complaint: nothing availed. She was ready to call on Heaven to witness her purity; repelled the hinted imputation with tears of dissembled indignation. The Gentlemen, pitying the tortures of her invincible shame, assigned her a place in the Hospital. The pains of labour came on in the course of the next morning, and she was easily and safely delivered of a full-formed healthy child. No sickly symptoms attended the delivery; but the girl persisted in rejecting all food; pined with smothered grief; and died on the following day, heart-broken.

If I am rightly informed, there is at this time in one of the cells of Bedlam a young woman, violently frantic, whose derangement arose under similar circumstances.

Let it be remembered that many, perhaps most, of those sprightly-seeming damsels who swarm through all the day and all the night in every street of London, are the children of decent, and not a few of opulent and genteel parents. However gay may be the air which the nature of their miserable trade necessitates them to assume, their outset in prostitution has nearly corresponded with the above description. They were born timorous and bashful. The principle of shame is universally cherished as the chief instrument of education. Who can believe that any one of these has escaped the dreadful conflict of apprehension and remorse, has abandoned the most active and most firmly rooted principle of woman's nature, without many a pang?

But this is only the first stage of misery. There are yet other hells below this hell, to which this is but an adyt of horror.

This period of calamity is, I believe, rarely taken into their calculation by those occasional seducers, in whose breasts sensuality has not wholly smothered every spark of benevolence; and who satisfy their conscience with a resolution to preserve the kind fair one from absolute beggary by some stipend. Few indeed, even of the more severe moralists, seem to consider prostitution from its outset as a series of unexampled horrors. To the consideration of these I shall submit a few lines from an unpublished poem, intitled "*London Cries*:"

“ Daughters of wretchedness ! miscall’d of vice,
 For you no lures of tingling lust entice :
 Cold hopeless want and hunger’s dire demand,
 With venal Houri, fill the swarming Strand :
 Rather ye loath, ye dread !—poor outcast race !
 The loveless, joyless, unendear’d embrace.—

* * * * *

—There are, whose bigot zeal and frantic ire,
 Sees flaming for your sins Tartarian fire.
 Rough rocks of virtue ! on whose barren side
 The soundest shoots degen’rate into pride !
 Did never lovely nymph, as chaste as fair,
 Pure, blooming innocence, attract your care ?
 Dare ye cry “ No ? ” Your flesh, your form deny ?—
 Nay, love has once inflam’d your youthful eye.
 There sweetly virtue bloom’d, with beauty blent—
 These once, like her, were fair, were innocent :
 Were Virtue’s self ! till hell’s unfathom’d arts
 Their Eye-like faith subdu’d, and trembling hearts ;
 Till fell seduction from its bosom hurl’d
 Its mangled prey, to glut a lustful world.
 Know ye how fierce the never-dying flame
 Of keen remorse, and inward-stifled shame,
 And pangs of slighted love, and famine bare,
 With ceaseless wounds those tender bosoms tear ?

* * * * *

It may be observed, that in almost all civilized countries there are vast numbers of young men and young women, who, from the narrowness of their circumstances, dare not entertain a hope of marriage ; whose passions, inflamed by continual recurrence of stimulating occasion, overwhelm all powers of reasoning. The purest principles of general benevolence, the most virtuous resolutions,

even piety itself gives way to the ardour of a susceptible constitution, and the temptations of intoxicating opportunity. Such indeed is passion; the dangerous violence of which all moral effort should be exerted to restrain. But a due reflection on the consequences of such fatal indulgence will unquestionably incline every generous and feeling man to avoid, rather than plot the contrivance of such opportunities; and will also stimulate him, with unremitted exertion, to guard through life from every possible evil, and to provide with all due comforts the unfriended object of his passion*.

SECOND STAGE.

I HAVE hitherto spoken only of the unhappiness immediately consequent on the surrender of chastity, and previous to the time of its discovery by incensed relations. What was before vague apprehension is now a terrible reality. The eye of kindness is swoln and distorted with fury and contempt. Father, brother, sister, are names of endearment which the tongue of the abashed, confounded being dares utter no more. The father, whose whole joy seemed interwoven with

* See *Townson's Travels in Hungary*, Presburg, p. 443, for some interesting reflections on a circumstance there related.

her happiness, now exerts every malignant energy to overwhelm her with the keenest misery. He curses the hour of her birth, imprecates her death, and rarely refrains, whatever be his station in life, from the infliction of violent blows, and from every instance of ferocity that extreme rage can dictate. Her ears are stunned with studiously exaggerated expressions of hatred and scorn ; her brother meets her with a scowl of indignation, and disdains to reply to her agonizing supplications ; her sisters fly from her approach with looks of terror, as from a thing infectious. Even her mother, whose kind bosom was ever the pillow of her infant sorrow, turns from her with an aspect of abhorrence. She is banished from the family circle. In many instances she is instantly thrust into the street, and forbidden, with severe menaces, ever more to cross her paternal threshold. If this act of mad barbarity be not immediately performed, the poor wretch is but imprisoned in a home of horror, exposed to the malicious insults of unfeeling domestics, debarred from every earthly comfort, and tortured with all the stings of conscious infamy and unrelenting reproach.

Let us figure to ourselves the well-educated daughter of parents reduced from affluence to poverty, whose sentiments and manners a jealousy of farther degradation has tintured with habitual severity. No common arts were employed in the seduction of such a child, and no mean deceiver undertook the work of villany. Plots long pro-

jected and intricate were laid to mislead her sentiments and to inflame her passions. The delights to be procured by riches were presented in a thousand ways to her view, and contrasted with the drudgery of continual subservience to the caprices of morose relations. She was allured to dances; her blood, heated by exercise, was inflamed by luscious wines, in which drugs, well known to preys on virginity, had been infused. Opportunity was precontrived, and her ruin was completed.

The fury of her implacable parents renders home insupportable. The watchful seducer generously favours her flight to London; displays his beautiful prize, the ornament of his phaeton, in the Park, for a single season; at the end of which he contrives to lodge her in a brothel, and abandons her for ever.

Giddy with the whirling hurry of a new life, where a constant succession of objects, brilliant and strange, have bewildered her imagination, she has for a while found little opportunity of reflecting on the past, or looking forward to the future. What are now her feelings!

Calm domestic scenes, for ever past, rush upon her memory! The cheering kindness of her mother, the ardent caresses of her father, occupy her reverie. She recalls the little tales and the remarks, of no importance, that on some happy occasion were imparted to her listening brother and sister in playful confidence. These are all

dead to her now ! She is alone ; in a house of strangers ; in a house of infamy. The idea of utter solitude is shocking to humanity. Her solitude is that of a wanderer in an African desert, when the howling of ravenous beasts is heard around him. She reposed in her innocence upon a mound of flowers. A sudden irruption of the ocean has torn from the main land the soil on which she stood ; she is hurried with it into the wide and roaring waste of waters. In vain she screams for help : the mountainous wave hides the whole coast from her view. The gaping monsters of the deep swim round her sinking turf, and watch the moment to devour her ! Not less hideous are the glances of the traders in lust, on whose mercy she feels herself dependent.

I will not attempt to detail the means employed by the keepers of a bagnio to subdue her pride and delicacy ; which hitherto, though sullied, have not been destroyed ; though injured, have received no mortal wound. The horror and indignation with which their first proposals for establishing her only scheme of maintenance are received, cannot be described : the imagination of virtue would be tortured to madness in conceiving it. It is her only mode of maintenance ! She is driven from all abodes of decency, like one marked with blotches of the plague. He, in whose love she had rested all her hope, her deceiver, has abandoned her for ever. No heart was ever implanted by the Creator in any human bosom so

utterly devoid of sensibility, as to tolerate such laceration, such disruption of all alliance, of all hope, without suffering an extremity of agony unparalleled by any bodily torture.

THIRD STAGE.

SHE has sunk into the abhorred gulf of degradation. She has sold for pay the endearments of love. In the consciousness of indelible pollution, she becomes even to herself an object of contempt. The sensation of debasement benumbs every faculty. She seems changed to a piece of senseless mechanism. All that gave dignity to an animated being, to a human creature, seems extinguished. She obeys the beck and nod of the tyrant of the bagnio. She exposes herself to examination as a beast in a public market, and submits to every gross caprice of every visitor who condescends to regard her with the eye of occasional desire.

In this state of torpid subjection, a bare daily sustenance is for a short time obtained—for a very short time ; for, in a few weeks, (to remain safe for months is rare in the extreme,) some unprincipled embracer communicates that dreadful disorder which undermines the constitutions of

half the youth of this kingdom, and perhaps three-fourths of those on the continent; and which hurries the greater part of these unhappy girls to an untimely grave.

She is no longer serviceable to the mistress of the stew. Of all her miserable earnings she has from day to day been plundered. Unjust demands are now clamorously made for the payment of her lodging. Whatever yet remains of the comforts of her former situation she is obliged to pawn at less than a hundredth part of its real value. Some trinket, perhaps given by her mother at an instant of festive happiness, and preserved amidst her various miseries with religious veneration and affection, is torn from her. Her agony is dumb. To whom can she make complaint? From whence can she hope for succour? She is harassed with threats of arrest, and served with counterfeit writs for debts never incurred, and frequently for smaller sums than those for which, by law, any person may be arrested. She is assailed with every insult that brutal cruelty can utter or inflict. The very cloaths she wears are at length seized from her back. Sick, advanced in pregnancy, and half naked, she is thrust into the streets.

FOURTH STAGE.

COLD and terrified, whither can she turn her steps ! she has no money, no friend. Every house is shut against her : the pavement must be her bed. Fainting with misery, she sinks on the damp ground. The brawling crowd pass by her, too eager in their own concerns to notice her distress ; or, if her sobs should attract observation, she is insulted with the taunts of the antiquated prude, and the jests of thoughtless and unfeeling youth. As night comes on, perhaps she strays into a part of the town where the police is partially severe ; she is seized by the constable of the night ; lodged on damp straw in a miserable dungeon ; and condemned, unheard, in the morning, to be punished, for the crime of wretchedness, by hard labour in a Bridewell. Whatever remains of her former delicacy is here crushed and trampled on with all the malignity of hardened vice ; while thrust amidst a multitude of wretches without principle or shame, she toils, in terror of the lash, to execute a task to which even in health her strength was never adequate.

But possibly she avoids this latter painful situation by attracting the desires of her fierce arrester, who, after suffering her to languish out half the night in his dungeon, not indeed in solitude, but

crowded with all the offspring of humanity, who have been seized upon their prowl in search of mischief and of rapine ; at length, upon gross considerations, reflecting too that he may not be able to bring any sufficient charge against her*, turns her again into the street, in the midst of a heavy wintry storm. After such a scene of horror, exposure to the night-air and to the drenching tempest, becomes tolerable. Cold, hunger, pain, and shame, now agitate her with their conflict. The undistinguishing lust of some passenger, who discredits and perhaps laughs at her tale of misery, from whom she is compelled by the imperious terror of starvation to hide her worst calamity, provides her with means of scanty subsistence. She has no other method of obtaining food from

* The constable may arrest suspicious night-walkers, by the statute of 5 Edw. III. cap. 14. But then that suspicion must not be a mere causeless suspicion ; but must be founded upon some probable reason ; and so it was ruled in the case of the Queen and Tooley, Mich. 1709, for the murder of Dent, who was killed in aiding the constable, who had taken up a woman that was walking the street, upon suspicion, as being a woman of ill fame. C. J. Holt delivered the resolution of the Court, that it was not murder, and gave this for one reason : " That it was not lawful, even for a legal constable, to take up a woman upon a bare suspicion only, having been guilty of no breach of the peace, nor any unlawful act ; and as to the case in 13 H. VII. cap. 10. the reason thereof was, because it was in view of the constable who found her misdoing ; that of late, constables made a practice of taking up people only for walking the streets, but he knew not whence they had such an authority." MS. Rep. *Hale's Hist. P. C.* v. ii. p. 89.

night to night, or of hiring a dark corner in a night-cellar, where stretched upon the ground, she may hide her head and slumber, (if the morbid torpor of despair can be called slumber,) through the day. A large share of the miserable earnings of vice is extorted in the streets by watchmen*. Of a larger portion she is despoiled by a race of the most ravenous, yet cowardly, monsters that disgrace the name and form of man, called bullies, fiends of the night-cellar. What scenes must she now witness of vice, in all its worst deformity, of villany, of misery†, of horror. With what

* “ I had been hunted almost into a fever by the watchmen of the quarter of the town I frequented : one whom I had unwittingly offended giving the word to the whole pack. You can scarcely conceive the tyranny exercised by these wretches, considering themselves as the instruments of the very laws they violate. The pretext which steels their conscience hardens their heart. Not content with receiving from us outlaws of society a brutal gratification gratuitously, as a privilege of office, they extort a tithe of prostitution, and harass with threats the poor creatures whose occupation affords not the means to silence the growl of avarice.”

† A newspaper, some years ago, gave an account of the trial of a man who let lodgings of this kind to mendicants and prostitutes. He was charged as the murderer of a negro beggar, who had been his lodger. It appeared that several men and women beggars, and girls of the town, slept together in the same room with this negro. Their wretchedness was extreme. To vindicate the keeper of the lodging from the charge of cruelty, it was shewn in evidence, that he permitted the negro to remain during a long sickness of a nature that made him very offensive to the other lodgers ; and though the poor wretch had been long unable to pay for his bed, he gave him, as a daily charity, the drainings of his tea-pot, which indulgence caused much discon-

wretches of her own sex is she not compelled to associate ; corrupted, and horribly foul in their manners as well as in their bodies ? Yet in this abyss, this hell of all that is dreadful and disgusting, she must exert her countenance to wear a smile, her voice to assume a tone of hilarity, and every limb to display that air of impudence so inviting, as they suppose it, so characteristic of the trade of prostitution. The pains of child-birth come upon her, while the disease, which occasioned her expulsion from the bagnio, eats into her vitals, and rankles in her veins with all its utmost virulence. No friendly hand supports her drooping head. Oh, God ! now speed thy shaft of death—suffer, at length, this agonized being to find rest !

Should a constitution, naturally strong, enable her to survive the labour, a short period hence will

tent and jealousy among the lodgers, who thought themselves better entitled to such favour, as they paid their rent. It appeared that the negro must have been starved, had not a poor prostitute regularly given him half of the red herring destined for her own meal. The circumstance on which the charge of murder was founded, was as follows :—The negro was evidently at the point of death. The fear that his body, lying in the same room with the other lodgers, would prove infectious, occasioned the landlord, at the earnest entreaty of all, except the humane prostitute, who expressed horror at the proposition, to lift the poor wretch in his last moments, bear him on his back into the street, and lay him on a heap of rubbish in a retired corner, where, in a few minutes, he expired. If I recollect right, the culprit was reprimanded for wanting humanity ; but the act was not pronounced to be murder.—V. Appendix, No. II.

present her to our view ; her beauty, wasted with misery or disfigured by malady, ill-treated by ignorant quacks, squallid and in rags, madly endeavouring to drown, by continual recourse to stupifying draughts, all memory and consciousness of what she once was, of all her past and present miseries.

The last moments of the life of one of these unhappy females exceed, perhaps, in horror the approach of death under any other circumstances. The wretch, in an *Auto da Fe*, condemned to be burnt alive for an imprudent avowal of religious sentiments, receives some comfort from considering that his persecutors are in error, while the faggots crackle around him ; and, in spite of the priest's denunciations of eternal torture, hopes for a happy change of existence. No such hope cheers the tortured soul of the dying prostitute : no voice of comfort tells her that the God whom she has been taught to consider as the torturer of the vicious, has charity for the wretched ; a charity unknown to mortals. The recollection of the past revives with racking anguish in these moments. The attempt to mutter a prayer, taught in the days of spotless infancy, recalls a thousand minute instances of happy innocence. The roar of rage, or jesting blasphemy, destroys her momentary reverie. Even while the damps of death bedew her cold limbs, some wretched inhabitant of the same living tomb, the night-cellar, rendered desperate, infuriate by want, steals or tears from

under her the ragged sackcloth that alone protected her from the broken pavement.

This faint sketch may serve for the outline of the story of almost all the unhappy females that wander during the night, exposed to wind and rain, and all the terrible severities of winter, through every street of this metropolis. The principal variations in their history, consisting in the different modes by which they have been led into this way of life, and the different situations from which they have fallen.

Some have been led astray by lovers of their own condition, who would probably have been glad to marry them, were not the expences of a family too grievous for them to support. These, private persecution, or the severe policy of parish-officers, has driven from their homes. Others, while seeking for employment in creditable service, innocent and unsuspecting, have been retained by grave matronly procuresses, and sold at an auction of virginity to the highest bidders, who, with the aid of these excellent mistresses, will undertake their seduction, or, to speak more strictly, ravishment. These, perhaps, have friends in some distant parts of the country, who would pity their misfortunes, and willingly receive them to their homes; but care is taken that they never shall have money enough to empower them to return, while their persons can be turned to profit; and, after they have been driven into the streets, they never acquire sufficient for that purpose; or

are persuaded by other girls not to attempt it ; and are soon too much overwhelmed with shame to bear even the thought of presenting themselves to their relations, if any opportunity should be afforded them of doing so.

“ I cannot ” (says Mrs. Woolstoncraft, in the ‘ Rights of Woman,’ p. 155) “ avoid feeling the most lively compassion for those unfortunate females who are broken off from society, and by one error torn from all those affections and relationships that improve the heart and mind. It does not, frequently, deserve the name of error ; for many innocent girls become the dupes of a sincere, affectionate heart ; and still more are, as it may be emphatically termed, ruined before they know the difference between virtue and vice ; and thus prepared by their education for infamy, they become infamous. Asylums and Magdalens are not the proper remedies for these abuses. It is justice, not charity, that is wanting in the world. A woman who has lost her honour, imagines that she cannot fall lower ; and as for recovering her former station, it is impossible. No exertion can wash this stain away. Losing thus every spur, and having no other means of support, prostitution becomes her only refuge, and the character is debased by circumstances over which the poor wretch has little power.”

Not a few are the children of miserable and vicious parents, whose daily apprehensions of absolute destitution, of rags to cover their naked-

ness, or bread to allay the painful cravings of hunger, have led them early to initiate their offspring in the mysteries of vice, that they may exchange the horrors of impending starvation for the less dreaded miseries of prostitution. Maid-servants in private families, chamber-maids at inns, and female milliners, are, from innumerable temptations and opportunities, made the frequent prey of their young masters, fellow-servants, passengers, and customers. But perhaps the debauching of the greatest number of women of the town is (after all) owing to the constant, deliberate, and systematic practices of professed brothels.

“ When it is considered” (says Mr. Colquhoun, ‘ Police of the Metropolis,’ p. 452) “ that above *fifty thousand females!* are supposed to live chiefly by prostitution in this great metropolis, a strong impulse must arise in the mind favourable to an institution which would afford the means of reforming the morals of at least a part of these unfortunate and miserable outcasts.”

The pious, benevolent, enthusiastic Wilberforce, although frequently baffled and deluded in the Senate, returns again and again to the charge of humanity, and reiterates, in vain, his incontestable arguments in favour of the wretched negroes. Christianity indeed is mocked, all human charity is outraged by the trade of blood. But are there no instances of extreme misery that ask for the interposition of piety and humanity within our own hemisphere, our own quarter of the globe, our

own island, that we extend our views to the West Indies and to Africa? What are the sorrows of the enslaved negro from which the outcast prostitute of London is exempted? A seducer or a ravisher has torn them both, for ever, from the abodes of their youth, has divided them from the friends they loved, has bereft them of all social endearments, has exposed them in a land of strangers, where their grief is turned to mockery, where violent brutality assails their persons, and where contumelious pride degrades them from the dignity of human nature, and tramples them to a level with the meanest of the brute creation. Is the bosom of the unhappy girl less tender than that of the swarthy savage? or is her mind, polished by education, less acute, less capable of comparing the blessings of which she is deprived with the horrors she is destined to encounter? The slave, reposing from his fiery task, reflects that his friends will raise a mound of earth to his memory, and bedew it with the tears of affection; he feels the rapid approach of death with emotions of joy, and contemplates "beyond the cloud-capt hills an humble heaven." What are the reflections of the outcast female? she well knows that all who once were called her friends, hold her memory in detestation, and load her name with curses. Her feverish dreams of futurity present a God of vengeance, prepared to overwhelm her soul in flames and torture everlasting.

Of Legislative Interference in these Cases.

MANY, I am aware, will here be ready to suggest that an evil of such magnitude can never be adequately remedied by any private exertions : that it is an object for the serious attention of Government, which ought to provide measures for reducing the existing mass of misery, and for preventing its farther augmentation. All instances of governmental interference in these cases, with which my inquiry has made me acquainted, lead me, on the contrary, to regard this point as one toward which the ruling power ought to proceed with extreme caution ; and respecting which, its best efforts will be directed to second and support private establishments. I am glad to meet with sentiments so similar to my own in Mr. Colquhoun's excellent Treatise on the "Police of the Metropolis : " where I find institutions for the relief of "forlorn prostitutes, who are willing to work for their subsistence, but unable to find employment on account of the loss of character," reckoned as desiderata under the head of "Establishments relative to the corruption of morals, depending chiefly on private munificence, and where legislative regulations are not immediately necessary."

The ineffectiveness of penalties in cases of fornication may, I think, be sufficiently deduced from the following instances :

Terrible is the severity of the Jewish law against this vice. In Deut. xxiii. 17, it is expressly commanded, that there should not be a whore of the daughters of Israel. Deut. xxii. 21, a woman playing the whore, if the daughter of a common person, shall be stoned to death : but if the daughter of a priest, be burned with fire. Lev. xxi. 9. Yet the Jews in their corruption would not consider fornication as forbidden by these and similar laws. They were regarded as concerning only women of their own nation : their laws did not extend to foreigners : and accordingly public stews were openly tolerated among them, and the women residing there taken under the protection of their government. Doubtless they were presently filled with Israelitish women, presumed to be foreigners from their place of abode. Thus both the law and the exposition fell soon into contempt and were forgotten.

At Athens a man notoriously addicted to this vice was incapable of being elected into the Court of Areopagus. The laws of Solon forbade him to harangue the people. He was prevented from giving his vote in the *ἐκκλησία*, or general assembly ; and lost the honour of the *προεδρία*, or first seats at public shews. But of what avail were these and other laws of similar tendency against the torrent of Athenian debauchery. (Aulus Gellius

records a law of Romulus "Pellex aram Junonis ne tagito si taget arnum foeminam caedito." This was an edict of simple days.)

Heavy penalties were enacted at Rome under several of the Emperors against fornication, as well as other species of profligacy ; but they were launched upon an ocean of degeneracy, and rapidly ingulfed. Indeed, as is well shewn by Montesquieu, to produce a reformation of manners was not their interest, nor will these edicts betray any such intention.

Burnet, in a letter from Zurich, speaking of the inhabitants of Bern, says, "that among them, at that time, the fifth act of fornication was punished with death." This excessive severity of punishment we may suppose to have been of little effect, as the lowest person may be conceived to possess better notions of an adequate apportionment of penalties to crimes, than to expose, by information, such a criminal to such a punishment. Burnet indeed saw an execution of a woman at Bern for repeated acts of fornication ; but this hardly amounts to an exception against the foregoing remark : for the woman had securely carried on the trade of prostitution for several years, and might have done so for many years longer if she had but possessed the virtue of holding her tongue ; but she was her own accuser, hoping at the same time to bring down punishment on the head of one of her gallants against whom she chanced to be incensed.

Nugent says of the Spinhuisen in Holland (bridewells for prostitutes) ; “ The manner of confining them is such, that the end thereby proposed, which should be that of reclaiming them, is not at all answered : for those under whose custody they are, who frequently are very grave and sober-looking matrons, permit gentlemen for a trifle of money (that Dutch God) to have access to them, so as to speak through the grates : on which occasion it is customary for them to treat their visitors with such abominable discourses, and indecent actions, as are shocking to men of any sense or morality.”

But the inefficiency of penalties in regard to this vice cannot be better exemplified than by remarking that, in our law, open and notorious lewdness, by frequenting houses of ill fame, is an indictable offence ; Poph. 208 ; or by some grossly scandalous and public indecency, is punishable by fine and imprisonment. 1 Siderf. 168.

On the other hand, since pure morality can alone be considered as the fundamental basis of all law, we surely must regard the moral dignity of Legislation as miserably tarnished and debased, when we see it so demeaned as to take upon itself the office of a Bawd ; to pamper the riotous desires of that youth which it ought to awe by its example, and restrain by its wholesome institutions ; when we see it condescend to bargain and compound with vice, to naturalize evil upon certain lax conditions, rather than exert its proper energies to oppose it : like the enfeebled Romans endeavouring to bribe

away the injuries of their Gothic invaders, by vain allotments of territory and subsidies, inviting mischief by certain counter-action of their illjudged purposes. The moral fence of law being once permitted to be violated by direct assent of that power which chiefly exists for its protection, the legions of vice will never fail to take advantage of such fatal precedent: and far must it lie beyond the powers of human foresight to ascertain by what degree of wretchedness the rapid accumulation of profligacy shall be limited.

Endeavours at alleviating the effects of so great a moral malady, by regulations that firmly engraft the evil itself upon Society, and insure its rapid increase, are countenanced as wise and useful, among people who would consider it as a mark of madness in any one who should propose to introduce, by inoculation, a physical malady into the body of an individual, without a complete knowledge and previous application of such antidotes as might prevent its mischievous increase, insure its quick removal, and prevent all possibility of its revival.

In most parts of the European continent, public stews are tolerated, or rather licensed by both the ecclesiastical and civil power; and particular places are appointed for the erection of the public brothels: in compassion, forsooth, to those in whom the flesh is weak; or to quench the hot passions of the profligate, that they may abstain from modest women. Physicians and surgeons are salaried, from the public treasury, who may attend and cure

those who are venercally infected, lest they should communicate the disorder *.

At Venice these houses are said to be remarkably numerous, spacious, and well filled; to which, perhaps, a quibbling couplet I have somewhere met with may allude,

Urbe cur in Venetâ scortorum millia tot sunt?

In promptu causa est, est Venus orta mari.

It is said that those who die in these places are not generally allowed burial in consecrated ground, nor to receive absolution when dying; but doubtless the market of indulgences is open to them as well as to others.

If indeed it were the object of Venetian legislators to quench, as I before said, the passions of their profligate youth; that they may be less inclined to debauch virgins or to alienate the affections of married women from their husbands, a total abolition or strict regulation of their Carnival might probably have been thought of, as being likely to prove of some service in that respect.

Burnet remarks, "Though Venice is the place, in the whole world, where pleasure is most studied, and where the youth have both the greatest wealth and most leisure to pursue it; yet it is of all places that where true and innocent pleasure is least understood†."

The ingenious author of "Voyage Historique

* Vide Appendix, No. III. † Letter III. from Florence.

d'Italie," being desirous to vindicate the Pope from the common charge against him of keeping a brothel, introduces the subject by telling us that he accidentally took lodgings at the house of a famous courtezan, who lived in the Strada Papale, a street through which the Pope constantly passes in his way to St. Peter's. What surprized me, says he, was, that for the few hours during which I kept this lodging, "j'avois vue entrer plusieurs personnes qui me paroissoient être de distinction, quelques Abbés & plusieurs Prêtres, parmi lesquels je ne voudrois pas jurer qu'il n'y eut quelque Prelat." The courtezans are tolerated, says he; but so far from being approved or encouraged, that heavy and infamous penalties are by law established against them. They are forbidden, for example, to carry on their trade during Lent.

A law, which prohibits only in part what it might affect generally, tacitly allows that to which its prohibition does not extend.

It appears, that the prostitutes, who are all regularly registered, are under legal disability of making wills, and their effects at their deaths are forfeited to his Holiness. These forfeitures were formerly appropriated to the support of penitentiary girls in the Convent of Santa Maria Magdalena; but the Popes finding them likely to prove a rich source of revenue, seized them to their own use, allowing the penitents to follow the occupation of washing and mending linen for their sub-

sistence. Under this pretext they are visited "par tout le monde." Whether these facts suffice to exculpate the Pope from the abovementioned charge, I leave the reader to judge*.

On the general moral character of modern Rome, and its peculiarly predominant vices, I need not expatiate; but shall only observe, that whatever laws may exist there against prostitutes, there appear to be some reasons, even of profit, for their not being put in force too rigorously; they are undoubtedly of no effect; and perhaps they could not with justice be enforced, where morality, if it be not actually decried or held forth as of small moment, is at least unsupported by any systematical encouragement, religious or political: to say nothing of indulgences, &c. to which I have already alluded in speaking of Venice†.

Thunberg, in his travels, making mention of women regularly trained to prostitution in Japan, says, "I wondered at these vicious institutions amongst a people in other respects so sensible, and was informed, that this establishment had taken rise during a civil war, when the Kubo (or Secular Emperor) dispossessed the Dairi (or Pope) of the imperial power, except over ecclesiastical matters.

* Vide Appendix, No. IV.

† "By a bill pasted on the gates of Salerno, All common prostitutes, who intend to ply for hire during the fair, are enjoined to appear before the magistrates, declare their profession, and pay ten carlini a head for a licence."

Swinburne's Travels in the Two Sicilies,

The Dairi was obliged to fly with his court to Simonoseki. His court consisted then, as at present, of none but the fair sex ; and he is even now considered so holy that no man may approach him. In his flight, being closely pursued by his enemies, his foster-mother leaped with him into the sea, where both perished. His female servants, Jorussi, or concubines, who arrived at Simonoseki, having nothing to subsist on, had recourse to prostitution." Thus the Japanese Pope evidently contributed, by mere accident, to the establishment of the meretricious system. It does not appear that he extorts any revenue from these poor girls, or confiscates their little property at their deaths, or denies them the decent honours of a funeral.

I find in Modern Universal History, vol. iii. p. 22. that "Common women are tolerated in most parts of Hindostan ; but they must be registered and licensed before they can have liberty to open a house. Some of the better sort of these prostitutes repair at certain times to Court, to divert the Great Mogul with singing their wanton songs and playing on their timbrels." These prostitutes are doubtless of the meanest cast among the Hindoos, for we are told that, in general, amongst them "adultery and fornication are reckoned so criminal, that rather than the offenders shall escape punishment, their own brothers will not scruple to take away their lives ; for which barbarity they shall not be called to an account, but be commended." Thus, instead of devising

encouragements to marriage, they countenance a vice amongst the lower cast of people; and amongst their men in general, for which they inflict death upon their women.

The laws of Solon punished celibacy, dignified and privileged the marriage state, cast such opprobrium on fornication, that it was forbidden to derive the name of a harlot from any of the sacred games; yet Solon allowed the Temple of Venus, *πανδημος*, to be used as a public stew. It is true that foreigners only were allowed to keep these houses; and their courtezans were *ξεναί*, captives, and other slaves: we hear also of one Eutymachus, who, for the defilement and prostitution of Olynthia, an Athenian girl, was punished with death. Vide orationem Dinarchi cont. Demosthenem:—Vos profecto (Athenienses) de quibusdam pro longè minoribus peccatis magna nec exorabilia sumsisistis supplicia: vos Menonem molitorem quum ingenuum puerum Pellenæum habebat in mola occidistis: vos Themistium Aphidnæum quod Rhodiam quandam Citharistiam stuprarat Eleusiniis: vos Eutymachum quod Olynthiam ancillam in ædiculâ collocarat, &c.—Interp. Gul. Cantero.

Ælian and Herodotus inform us, that it was a general custom amongst the Lydian women to carry on the trade of prostitution for a certain time, by way of acquiring good portions, which might enable them to get good husbands! We are told likewise, that after marriage they were wonderfully chaste!—Credite, posteri!

It is not only notorious, that public stews do not answer any of the purposes for which they were originally intended, but are also productive of greater evils than those which they were meant to remedy.

They who defend these institutions usually have grounded their opinions on this notion, namely, that they serve to avert the violence of the lewd and profligate from the persons of their wives, sisters, or daughters. However, I think no advocate for such establishments will venture to offer any instance of a state, in which seductions, adulteries, and rapes have been the less frequent on account of the licensing such places.

They may be said to render the enjoyment of women easy and tolerably secure, to a certain extent. But gratification is no quencher of desire. The ancient poets and historians, and many parts of the Continent at this day, present us with horrible instances of the mischiefs of desires, still unsated, where the easy access to women of all conditions has early damped the ardour of natural passions*.

*Nemo satis credit tantum delinquere, quantum
Permittas : adeo indulgent sibi latius ipsi.* JUVENAL.

This palliative system is, in fact, as delusive as it is dangerous ; for it holds forth an apparent, temporary, and partial alleviation of the evil, of which it hastens and confirms the augmentation :

* Vide Appendix, No. III.

as the styptic effects of external applications to virulent eruptions of the body repel blotches perhaps from the skin, but spread abroad, throughout the whole animal system, malignant and self-generating disease.

Having digressed thus far in discussion of the objections I above anticipated, I shall venture to repeat as a conclusion what I have above advanced as a premise, that no interference of legislative power can, consistently with justice or sound policy, attempt either upon penal or palliative principles the extirpation or modification of this vice; nor, perhaps, effect any remedy of a nature sufficiently expeditious to afford present relief in a case of such complicated misery, as that to which I earnestly invoke the humanity and serious attention of the public.

In regard to Magdalen Hospitals, they are, doubtless, admirable monuments of the excellent, moral, and humane views of their founders and supporters. I am told that many are by these institutions led to sincere penitence, and wholly drawn aside from habits of profligacy and prostitution. These are satisfactory tidings *. But it must be obvious to any one, (who will reflect for a moment on the vast multitude of women of the town at present swarming and accumulating by daily additions, within, not merely the precincts of London and Westminster, but of

* Vide Appendix, No. V.

every great town in the kingdom ; and will then cast a look on the buildings intended to receive the penitents,) that the good effects of those establishments must be from their disproportion to such numbers very limited. Thus likewise, they who are most wretched and most deserving of compassion, as being most completely friendless, have upon that very account, however well disposed they may be to reformation, little chance of getting an introduction into these situations. But an object of no small importance in the eyes of every humane moralist, namely, the holding out timely relief to those whom either treachery or distress is on the point of urging into this abyss of disaster, can in no way fall within the view of professed penitentiary institutions.

*General Proposal of applying a Remedy to the Evils
above-mentioned, by means of private Exertions.*

HERE then arises the main question, What is that system which, possessing energies capable of continual augmentation, till they may become, in regard to this particular object, nearly equal to those of government, is yet liable to none of the foregoing objections ? I answer, It may be found in the establishment of a well-constituted society

of respectable gentlemen, supported by the voluntary contributions of either sex, of all ranks and degrees, who inhabit, occasionally visit, or are in any way connected with this metropolis; and of all, whose general philanthropy rejoices in every occasion of promoting the happiness and welfare of their species.

That abundant and discriminating spirit of philanthropy which seems to characterize the gentry of the present day above those of any former period, (and which has been of late so excellently manifested in liberal subscriptions for the relief of the distressed emigrants, in which all political and party prejudices have given way to the superior dictates of humanity; to which I may add those for the support of orphans and widows, from whose embraces the ravages of war have torn their fathers and their husbands; beside many others which the memory of every one will readily suggest,) affords me little doubt, that when they shall have fully considered the importance of the object I offer to their examination, and the effects which are likely to result from their well-directed benevolence, the great article necessary for carrying such an institution into effect will not be wanting.

Let not modesty and chastity fear to step forward in the cause of humanity to the relief of those who have transgressed their laws. Did they but know the tale of misery which these unfortunate, these despised, these much-injured out-

casts have to unfold, even Modesty and Chastity would sigh and would acquit them. Besides I shall presently endeavour to shew that our Society may not only hold out aid to the fallen, but may likewise interpose a guardian arm between the falling and the bottom of the precipice; and not unfrequently, by well-timed exertion, stay and draw back some, ere they have yet been driven by misery and madness to the brink.

The Ladies will surely regard them with compassion, as exiles from all communion with the chaste of their own sex; exiles, perhaps, for the commission of one single fault, which some more vicious, but more artful, might have concealed, and so have escaped such banishment; which has driven them, not into a country where Pity and Charity are ever ready to weep over their woes and to relieve their wants, but to a land of brutal insult, in which all they have hitherto been taught to reverence is set at nought, and where every succeeding instant threatens them with new situations of distress.

Women, in general, are possessed of fine feelings and of warm imaginations. This renders them for the most part exceedingly quick and skilful in placing themselves ideally into the situations of those whose conduct they have to examine, and in conceiving how, under similar circumstances, their own hearts and minds would have been affected. I call on the chaste and virtuous of the whole sex, of every rank and station,

to reflect what would be their feelings if reduced to situations such as those to which I have above alluded. Even the lowest orders of society have a strong interest in the success of such an institution, as it is from amongst them that the greatest number of these unfortunates may be naturally supposed to have been drawn.

What class or degree of men can be otherwise than powerfully impelled, by various and important motives, to wish and endeavour to promote the advancement of some such establishment? Legislators may supply, by private exertions, what in their public acts has been omitted. Divines may enforce the best precepts of religion, by examples of extensive charity. They, whose practice continually confirms how necessary to the due observation of law is the preservation of morality, may check the progress of vice, by diminishing two of its chief causes, scorn and poverty. I may be told that lawyers live by vice, as physicians by disease; but I listen not to those general railers against professions, who will endeavour to persuade themselves and others, that either the former would scruple to assist in the reduction of so principal a source of profligacy, or the latter in the removal of so terrible a cause of innumerable maladies: in the utter eradication of which, the chaste as well as the incontinent, the whole of the human species, the future as well as the present generation, nay all posterity, to the utmost limits of time, are strongly and equally interested.

What man is there so puffed up with false notions of his own dignity or sanctity of character, as to consider the state of these unhappy outcasts as an object beneath or unworthy of his notice? or who shall be found so destitute of generous and manly feeling as to regard a suffering female with unconcern? Are there parents, who from an over-scrupulous delicacy, bordering upon prudery, will withhold their succour, lest their example of pity should diminish, in the minds of their sons, that abhorrence for these miserable objects with which it is their wish to inspire them? Their's is a misjudging policy. Pity may be next to love in music, poetry, or courtship; but compassion is no kindler of desire. The exertion of generous sentiments removes all baser passions from the heart: the habit of such exertion either extinguishes their irritating fires, or at least (to borrow a phrase from Mr. Burke) "strips them of all their grossness!" A youth of noble mind will no sooner feel his libidinous appetite excited by the form of a wretch whom his charity has snatched from misery, than a tender-hearted virgin would long to devour a dove which her fortitude had rescued from the talons of a vulture.

I have already hinted, in my *Dedication*, to young men of fashion, to whom I shall here take the liberty of adding those of all ages and degrees, whom prudential or other motives restrain from entering into a married state, and who are yet unable to subdue their animal passions, that duty

and good policy demand of those for whom the fruit is torn from its native branches, to provide for it a comfortable shelter, which may save it from being rotted by the damps of autumn or the hurricanes of winter.

Even they who wish to see the utmost rigours of the police exerted against the common street-walkers, to rid the town of what they term nuisances, public outrages of decency, &c. however severely they may be inclined to regard them, may yet very consistently lend their aid to the proposed institution ; in which, as the objects of their censure must be continually under consideration, the points they wish to attain may be in a great degree effected, although by milder measures : for a reduction of the evil of which they complain must follow, as a natural consequence, from a diminution of its immediate cause ; and this without doubt will be found to exist among those very ills which, to search out and endeavour to obviate, will be the end and aim of such a Society.

PLAN and VIEWS of a SOCIETY proposed to be
established for the purpose of alleviating the
Miseries attendant on COMMON PROSTITUTION.

POVERTY, shame, and idleness are the grand sources of common prostitution.

Disease and extreme wretchedness are its inevitable consequences.

The rejection of modesty, eagerness after dissipation, thoughtless extravagance, disregard of the future, which accompany a state of prostitution among the lower classes, give birth to, and foster into active mischief, a multitude of vices, beside those of the sensual kind, by which society is variously aggrieved.

To remedy these evils, let a general Subscription be opened, and a Society be formed upon something like the following system :

Let a certain number of Subscribers be chosen from the rest, who shall declare themselves willing to fulfil completely the objects of the institution. I will suppose ten.

Let these appoint Committees of Accounts and Management, and of Inquiry.

Let there be a Committee of Inquiry composed of five members, situated in some central part of the town, to meet and examine petitions, recommendations, and accounts of particular cases,

at a fixed hour, once at least in every week. Three members might form a Committee for dispatch of business.

The Committee of Accounts and Management may have five members invested with powers of receiving subscriptions, depositing the money of the Society in safe hands, of appointing Surgeons, Stewards, or other persons to be employed in the service of the Society.

A meeting of this Committee should be held once in every week in some convenient place, attended by one or more Deputies from the other Committee, to resolve on the steps to be taken and modes of relief to be granted in cases sufficiently examined and approved*.

Questions of a general nature, such as relate to the organization of the Society, limitations or augmentations of the powers given to the different Committees, alteration or extension of means for carrying the views of the Society into execution, &c. may be discussed and determined in General Meetings of the Subscribers to be held half-yearly, or oftener, as may appear convenient.

Brief printed accounts of management during the period intervening between such General Meetings should be sent to all Subscribers.

As I shall suppose the Society to contain none but men of honour and good sense, it will be

* This meeting, including the members of the Committee of Inquiry, should be at least equal in number to a complete Committee.

right not to cramp their exertions by a superabundance of minute regulations.

The first expence to be incurred will consist in printing plans or outlines of the design for the Subscribers; in procuring a room or rooms for the use of the Committee; where, perhaps, a surgeon or nurse might attend at appointed times. The hire of a clerk or other servant will follow, when the number of subscriptions may warrant it. The institution must commence with small charities, which will of course be enlarged and extended in proportion to the number of Subscribers.

As it is presumed that due caution will be used in the distribution of the money, recommendations from all quarters, and applications from the unhappy objects of the charity themselves, should be constantly invited.

The particular species of relief to be afforded in various instances, must necessarily depend upon the peculiar circumstances of different cases.

Might not an unhappy girl, as above instanced in the Second Stage of Misery, when driven from her father's threshold, have been sheltered by such an Association; whose extensive connections might sooner or later have awakened the pity and restored her to the protection of her friends?

When she is first abandoned by her seducer, and left a lodger at a bagnio, the timely aid of such an institution might yet preserve her from common prostitution.

When, to pursue the several stages of distress above described, her designing landlady comes to demand payment of her exorbitant and unfounded charges, the interference of humanity might even now bring preservation.

Again, when destitute and diseased, the unhappy victim of craft and cruelty is about to be thrust into the streets, half naked and unfriended, what an object is here for the soothing care of Pity, and the supporting hand of Charity !

Each subsequent period of accumulated distress calls aloud for relief with proportionally increasing urgency.

It will be easy for any one possessed of common feeling and reflection to apply similar observations to all the other cases to which I have above alluded.

Large Penitentiary Houses might be erected, if at any time the abundance of contributions should enable the Society to engage in undertakings of such extent, in which females of a lower cast might receive kind and consoling treatment, and be brought back to habits of decency, and might be furnished with opportunities of earning a comfortable subsistence in any way in which they may testify a wish to be employed. Their time of remaining in these situations must be regulated by opportunities of restoring some to their friends, of placing others out at service, in any creditable situation that may prevent them from relapsing into their former line of life ; and, perhaps, of providing

some with honest and decent husbands. Coercive rigour of no sort should be used in any case, except for the necessary preservation of internal order.

But as this is an object of distant consideration, I shall forbear to dwell farther upon it at present.

A very moderate contribution may soon enable the Society to hold out donations of present relief to those whom, upon inquiry, they shall find to have the best founded claims to charitable assistance ; such as, proper medical aid upon various occasions ; the assistance of nurses ; conveniences of habitation, food, and clothing ; pecuniary help, towards the enabling some to return to their friends ; with premiums, by way of general inducement, to indigent relations who shall most readily receive them, and encourage their reclamation.

To those unfortunates whose miseries may be easily conceived to be peculiarly aggravated by reflection on the superior prospects in life with a view to which they have been educated, and whose situation is rendered doubly terrible by being continually contrasted in their imaginations with that in which they once knew content, and rejoiced in the luxurious gaiety of youth, and health, and innocence ; whose abhorrence of the wretched mode of gaining subsistence, in which necessity has involved them, cannot be exceeded by that of the most chaste and virtuous, the allowance of small pensions, to be continued or discontinued, increased or diminished, according to their subsequent conduct, would afford opportunities of doing

every thing for themselves which our most sanguine hopes might look forward to obtain for the inferior classes by the perfection of Penitentiary Institutions.

Perhaps, upon mature consideration, it may be regarded as consonant to the general purpose of such a Society, to hold forth rewards or tokens of honour to parents in indigent circumstances, who, instead of abandoning and exposing their daughters upon discovery of their frailty, have continued to cherish them, and shall be well known to have endeavoured to reclaim them.

I must here notice a case which seems to come peculiarly within the province of a Society formed upon these principles.

Young women who have lived for a twelve-month in a farmer's service, come every year to London, where they have no friends, with country recommendations, in hopes of what they call *bettering their conditions*; that is to say, of getting into the service of more genteel families, where wages may in time be advanced, or where their labour may be less severe; and where they have a confused notion that they may see something of *life*, or the *world*, or the *town*, which may make them wiser and greater than their ignorant and beggarly fellow-villagers. They are hired into families of inferior tradesmen at very low wages. All their dream of a happy change is quickly dissipated. The filth of a London house among the lower classes is irremediable: but to reduce it to a certain extent,

which even London habits can tolerate, requires unceasing assiduity. The servant of an inferior tradesman in London is singly employed in performing all that she had to do in the country with the constant assistance of the farmer's wife and children, and occasionally of the house-labourers, who bring wood and draw water, &c. In short, she has more than double her former labour, in the midst of darkness, stench, and noisome air, in close garrets or damp cellars, by which her health and spirits are soon injured. Some slight expression of discontent raises the tyrannic fury of a griping hard-hearted master or mistress, who find, perhaps, that she can still eat at a meal more than would suffice to serve the sickly family for a day. She is driven at a moment's warning into the street. The clothes in which she came first to London are nearly worn out. Her pittance of wages is insufficient to enable her to obtain a conveyance back into the country. Her enraged mistress refuses to give her a character by which she might obtain another place. She wanders to seek a lodging; not knowing one street from another; without a guide, and without an adviser. The consequence is inevitable. If, however, her eye should be caught by one of those boards which announce offices for hiring servants, means might be taken to direct her to the protection of our Society. Bills might be distributed or pasted in different parts of the town, to attract the eye, describing in a short sketch the kind of

cases to which relief is proposed to be extended, with reference to the office of the Society.

I know it will be asked what means can be established of obtaining certain and regular intelligence in regard to those whose miseries may entitle them to relief, but into whose obscure and filthy, or, at all events, infamous haunts, men of decent character may be deterred from examining personally, upon various prudential motives ; and from which all information, when acquired, would perhaps be rather painful in avowing, as appearing to come from sources awkwardly circumstanced in many respects ?

It must be owned there is much probability to lead to the belief, that dullness and profligacy would exert all their powers of scandal against men of grave and rigid manners as well as morals, who should chance to be observed in the occupation of exploring the retreats of some beautiful but unfortunate impures. Charity would be misconstrued into a cloak for desire ; and trite insinuations would be continually thrown out, without pretence indeed either to wit or truth, that liberality did not go unrequited, &c. They who have not courage to bid defiance to taunts of this nature, may doubtless find means of making inquiry into the situations of any who may chance to fall under their observation without a personal examination of their circumstances ; by means of confidential servants, for example, &c.

However, there are men who, to the purity of

their morals, add that manly firmness of character which dares malignity to its face, openly frowns impudence into confusion, and abashes calumny to awful silence. Such a man is the "*Integer vitæ scelerisque purus*" of Horace : Qui

Non eget Mauri jaculis neque arcu,

Quem justum & tenacem propositi
Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
Mente quatit solidâ.—

Would slander dare to dart its venom against a Howard or a Hanway thus employed ?

But some may feel an awkwardness in publicly communicating their knowledge of facts thus peculiarly circumstanced, which perhaps they have contrived to obtain in an indirect manner, that has hitherto exempted them from any apprehension of the taunts above mentioned, but to which they may think themselves exposed when they come forward to point out and recommend particular cases to the notice of the Society. Others also, who are likely to afford the most copious communication, and, perhaps, of the most authentic nature, may have very particular reasons for choosing to conceal the mode in which they have arrived at the knowledge of such circumstances.

To remove all scruples of this sort, it will be only necessary to observe, that a Subscriber recommending any real object of charity to the consideration of the Society, need only declare, "Such is the information I have received." How, when,

or where ? are questions of secondary importance. It may, indeed, facilitate farther inquiry to be informed of the channel through which such intelligence was gained ; but this may be pointed out without a declaration that it was from this very source that the acquaintance with the facts delivered was originally derived. The observation of every one in walking through the streets may be supposed to have furnished him with plentiful occasion of noting many unhappy girls by whose manners and appearance his humanity has been excited, and his curiosity powerfully attracted to make farther inquiry into their real situations. From various quarters which they themselves may point out, of which it will require no uncommon sagacity to appreciate the credibility ; from neighbouring tradesmen with whom they deal for common necessities ; from the landlords of the houses they occupy ; from gentlemen engaged in or connected with the medical profession ; from officers of the division or parish which they inhabit, and others whom a little consideration may readily suggest, abundant opportunities of obtaining full information as to the history and situation of any respecting whom such inquiry shall be set on foot, may undoubtedly be discovered.

To conclude :—Though it appears to me to be a point beyond dispute that, by the exertions of such a Society, terrible and various calamity may be prevented and relieved, and no small diminution of that general mass of complicated vice,

accumulated and still increasing in this metropolis, must be produced; yet were the good effects of our Institution to be solely limited to the reduction or extirpation of that fatal disorder, by whose widely-spreading poisons the blood of every family throughout the kingdom is in danger of being corrupted, the praise of every friend to humanity, and of all posterity, would be due to the undertaking.

If any thing contained in these pages shall chance to strike the mind of one whose character, fortune, and connections may enable him to establish on a broad and firm foundation, and to support with dignity, an institution of this nature; and who will, with a noble candour, stand forward to execute that of which another has sketched out, however imperfectly, some rudiments of a design, his be all the honour of the Institution; to me the private satisfaction of having suggested the idea, will be a more than adequate recompense for the slight pains of throwing these thoughts upon paper, and committing them to publication.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

I HAVE here drawn together, from the works of some interesting authors, a few striking passages which appear to illustrate or corroborate what I have above advanced.

The following extracts from "The Sisters; or, the History of Lucy and Caroline Sanson," are given with a wish to recommend to general notice a Novel, undoubtedly founded upon facts. The work evinces a thorough acquaintance with fashionable life; the scenes are highly wrought and judiciously arranged, and perhaps afford more exquisite examples both of tender and awful pathos than are to be found in any other production in our language. The style is unequal, the reflections being generally given in a diffuse, declamatory manner; but the language is usually correct, and the descriptions animated and strongly impressive. In a late edition some scenes of horror, representing vice in most disgusting colours, are omitted.

Vol. III. p. 24.—"Reflect on the numbers found in the populous streets of London, who are perishing with diseases, abandoned to infamy, and

in the last stages of distress, the ages of the greatest part of them not exceeding twenty years ; to which, indeed, few arrive ; the generality dying much younger, when few are esteemed women ! And can we be surprized ? A young creature is perhaps seduced at fifteen, soon abandoned, quickly common, and as quickly loathsome and detested ! Other intemperance is superadded ; and the fatal poison of spirituous liquors is greedily swallowed, to intoxicate and destroy the power of corroding conscience."

P. 127.—Lucy, dying amid the complicated miseries of want, sickness, and remorse, is discovered by her father at a wretched bagnio in St. Giles's :—

"The door was opened, and, lo ! a sight that would have pierced the heart of a barbarian !—Think then, oh ! think what must have been the agony of a tender and affectionate father !—The door, the miserable door expanded, and behold in a little horrid, gloomy apartment, stretched on the ground on a bed of straw, lay a wretched object, piteously groaning, and sorrowfully pouring forth her woeful lamentation. Mr. J. trembled ; his blood ran cold : the old man turned round short, caught hold of his hand, and said, ' Why are we brought hither ? what has this to do with my child ? what is all this horror to me ? '—' In truth, I know not, my dear Sir ; would we were away.'—' Hold, hold ; I'll call to yon poor creature—they said my Lucy was here—I'll ask her if

she knows her.' He advanced a few steps into the room ; his heart misgave him—he turned back, sent forth a deep groan, and fixed his eyes on Mr. Jaison.—' Do you speak to her ; 'tis strange—but when I attempt it, my breath is gone—I know not what to say—Pray ask her if she knows Lucy Sanson ?'

" Upon his saying this something louder than the rest, the poor object on the floor raised herself a little—and with a dismal, hollow voice, sighed forth, ' Who inquires for that miserable wretch, Lucy Sanson ?'—' I—I inquire ! Say, where is she ?—speak at once—where may I find her ?'—She raised herself a little more ; and, looking at Mr. Sanson, cried out, ' Alas, alas ! my father !—Oh, cursed lot !—worse, far worse than all beside.'—While the wretched father vents distracting lamentations over his dying daughter, mother Cox, the landlady, ' with fury and malignity of voice and action,' rushes into the room ; and pronouncing a hearty curse or two, declared ' she did not care a straw for his words ; her money she would have, and if he did not pay her by fair means, she knew how to get it by foul ; for she was not to be choused by such old grey-headed fools as he was.'—' Bad as the bed and covering may be, if you won't pay me, she must e'en lie on the ground, and rot if she likes it."

No. II.

The following passages, descriptive of the lodging houses mentioned in pages 21, 22, are extracted from the work of an author, whose authority, in these cases, will not be questioned. They are given at the greater length, as I am informed that the essay is become scarce.

“ THE following account I have had from Mr. Welch, the High Constable of Holborn ; and none who know that gentleman will want any confirmation of the truth of it :—‘ That in the parish of St. Giles’s, there are great numbers of houses set apart for the reception of idle persons and vagabonds, who have their lodgings for twopence a night : that in the above parish, and in St. George, Bloomsbury, one woman alone occupies seven of these houses, all accommodated with miserable beds from the cellar to the garret for such twopenny lodgers : that in these beds, several of which are in the same room, men and women, often strangers to each other, lie promiscuously, the price of a double bed being no more than threepence, as an encouragement to them to lie together : that as these places are thus adapted to whoredom, so are they no less provided

for drunkenness ; gin being sold in them at a penny a quartern ; so that the smallest sum of money serves for intoxication : that in the execution of search-warrants, Mr. Welch rarely finds less than twenty of these houses open for the receipt of all comers at the latest hours : that in one of these houses, and that not a large one, he hath numbered fifty-eight persons of both sexes, the stench of whom was so intolerable, that it compelled him in a very short time to quit the place.'—Nay, I can add, what I myself once saw in the parish of Shoreditch, where two little houses were emptied of near seventy men and women ; amongst whom was one of the prettiest girls I had ever seen, who had been carried off by an Irishman to consummate her marriage on her wedding night, in a room where several others were in bed at the same time.

“ Such is the poverty of these wretches, that upon searching all the above number the money found upon all of them (except the bride, who, as I afterwards heard, had robbed her mistress) did not amount to one shilling : and I have been credibly informed, that a single loaf hath supplied a whole family with their provisions for a week. Lastly, if any of these miserable creatures fall sick, (and it is almost a miracle, that stench, vermin, and want should ever suffer them to be well,) they are turned out in the streets by their merciless host or hostess, where unless some parish-officer of extra-

ordinary charity relieves them, they are sure miserably to perish, with the addition of hunger and cold to their disease.

“ This picture, taken from the life, will appear strange to many ; for the evil here described is, I am confident, very little known, especially to those of the better sort. Indeed, this is the only excuse, and I believe the only reason, that it hath been so long tolerated : for when we consider the number of these wretches, which, in the outskirts of the town, amounts to a great many thousands, it is a nuisance which will appear to be big with every moral and political mischief, &c. &c.”

Vide an Inquiry into the Causes of the late Increase of Robbers, &c. by HENRY FIELDING, Esq. pages 91, 92, 93.

No. III.

MANDEVILL'S *Fable of the Bees.* Remark.

“ WHERE six or seven thousand sailors arrive at once, as it often happens, at Amsterdam, that have seen none but their own sex for many months together, how is it to be supposed that honest women should walk the streets unmolested, &c.—For which reason the rulers of that city tolerate an uncertain number of houses, in which women are

hired as publicly as horses at a livery stable, &c.—The female traders that come to these evening exchanges are always the scum of the people, generally such as in the day-time carry fruit and other eatables about in wheel-barrows. The habits they appear in at night are very different from their ordinary ones; yet they are commonly so ridiculously gay, that they look like the Roman dresses of strolling actresses.—If to this you add the hard hands and coarse breeding of the damsels that wear them, there is no great reason to fear that many of the better sort of people will be tempted by them.”—

—“ Yet notwithstanding the good rules and strict discipline observed in these places, the Schout and his officers are always vexing, mulcting, and upon the least complaint removing the miserable keepers of them; which policy is of two great uses: first, it gives an opportunity to a large parcel of officers the magistrates make use of on many occasions, and which they could not be without, to squeeze a living out of the immoderate gains accruing from *the worst of employments, and at the same time punish those necessary profligates, the bawd, and pandars, which, though they abominate, they desire not wholly to destroy*: secondly, as on several accounts it might be dangerous to let the multitude into the secret, that those houses and the trade that is driven in them are connived at; so, by this means *appearing* unblamable, the wary magistrates preserve themselves in the good opi-

nion of the *weaker sort of people*, who imagine that the government is always endeavouring, though unable, to suppress what it actually tolerates. Whereas if they had a mind to rout them out, their power in the administration of justice is so sovereign and extensive, and they know so well how to have it executed, that one week, nay one night, might send them all a packing.

“In Italy the toleration of strumpets is yet more barefaced, &c. About 250 years ago, says M. de St. Didier, Venice being in want of courtezans, the Republic was obliged to procure a great number from foreign parts. Doglioni highly extols the wisdom of the state in this point, which secured the chastity of women of honour daily exposed to public violence, churches and consecrated places not being a sufficient asylum, &c.”

No. IV.

PALEY'S *Moral Philosophy*: Fornication, p. 246.

“THE avowed toleration, and in some countries the licensing, taxing, and regulating of public brothels, has appeared to the people an authorizing of fornication, and has contributed with other causes so far to vitiate the public opinion, that there is no practice of which the immorality is so little considered or acknowledged, although

there are few in which it can more plainly be made out. The legislators who have patronized receptacles of prostitution ought to have foreseen this effect, as well as considered, that whatever facilitates fornication diminishes marriages; and as to the usual apology for this relaxed discipline, the danger of greater enormities if access to prostitutes were too strictly watched and prohibited, it will be time enough to look to that after the laws and the magistrates have done their utmost. The greatest vigilance of both will do no more than oppose some bounds and some difficulties to this intercourse. And, after all, these pretended fears are without foundation in experience. The men are in all respects the most virtuous in countries where the women are most chaste."—

Page 251. "The injury (from seduction) to the woman is made up of the misery she suffers from shame, of the loss she sustains in her reputation, &c. This misery must be extreme, if we may judge of it from those barbarous endeavours to conceal their disgrace to which women, under such circumstances, frequently have recourse; and compare this barbarity with their passionate fondness for their offspring in other cases. Nothing but an agony of mind the most insupportable, can induce a woman to forget her nature, and the pity which even a stranger would shew to a helpless and imploring infant."

The frequency of child-murder, either by me-

dicines taken to procure abortion, by stifling in the instant of birth, or subsequent inhuman treatment, is a subject deserving of distinct consideration: though the extensiveness of this horrible practice, (of which they who are guilty are commonly objects of pity, not of abhorrence,) should operate strongly with the generous and humane to give their aid and support to something like the plan above proposed.

No. V.

The following lines from 'Matilda,' an elegant poem, written by Mr. Richards of Oriel College, Oxford, allude to that excellent Institution called the Magdalen Hospital in London :

"Thou sacred pile, to tender musing dear,
 Friend to distress when not a friend is near!
 'Tis thine to raise the soul's divinest heat;
 And pity claims thee for her favour'd seat:
 Low in thy cells the pious mourner lies:
 Thy echoes murmur penitential sighs.
 Red o'er their cheeks repentant blushes glow,
 And warm the tears of deep contrition flow.
 Mild trembling Modesty renews her grace,
 Softens the eye, and meekly bends the face,
 Descending Angels lend their guiding care,
 Prompt ev'ry sigh, and breathe in ev'ry pray'r."

Matilda thus describes the commencement of her sad career.

“ On the wide world a lonely wanderer cast,
By ev’ry human form unheeded past,
Th’ indignant matron pointing at my shame,
My presence baleful to an honest name,
Nature foregoing her maternal care
And rend’ring up my heart to blank despair;
I sprung, I flew to guilt’s polluted cell :
I dar’d misfortune ; check’d the tear that fell ;
Gave up all vain regret for earthly bliss,
And plunging sunk in Ruin’s dark abyss.”——
——“ I saw, I nightly saw, with wearied feet,
The beauteous mourner stray from street to street.
On the damp earth, beneath the dripping shed,
Languid she laid her melancholy head.
Pale was her cheek that met the icy air ;
Her faded eye was fix’d, as in despair.
Keen blew the wind, and wild came down the snow,
But her cold heart had ceas’d to ache with woe.
How chang’d from her, who, ’midst her native bow’rs,
Tended at setting sun her fragrant flow’rs ;
Or warbling sweet, to soothe a wearied sire,
Touch’d to some tender tune her golden wire.”

Goldsmith’s beautiful lines on the same occasion ought not to be here omitted:

——“ Ah, turn thine eyes
Where the poor houseless, shiv’ring female lies.
She once, perhaps, in village plenty blest,
Has wept at tales of innocence distrest :

Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn.
Now lost to all ; her friends, her virtue fled,
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head ;
And pinch'd with cold, and shrinking from the show'r,
With heavy heart deplores that luckless hour
When idly, first ambitious of the town,
She left her wheel and robes of country brown."

POSTSCRIPT.

I AM tempted to adorn the conclusion of this publication with quotations from two authors, whose vigour of sentiment and energy of diction present many instances of striking resemblance :

“ Let the libertine reflect a moment on the situation of that woman who, being forsaken by her betrayer, is reduced to the necessity of turning prostitute for bread, and judge of the enormity of his guilt by the evils which it produces.

“ It cannot be doubted but that numbers follow this dreadful course of life with shame, horror, and regret ; but where can they hope for refuge ? ‘ The world is not their friend, nor the world’s law.’ Their sighs, and tears, and groans, are criminal in the eyes of their tyrants, the bully and the bawd, who fatten on their misery, and threaten them with want or a gaol, if they shew the least design of escaping from their bondage.

“ To wipe all tears from all faces is a task too hard for mortals, but to alleviate misfortunes is often within the most limited power ; yet the opportunities which every day affords of relieving the most wretched of human beings are overlooked and neglected with equal disregard of policy and goodness.

“ There are places indeed set apart, to which these unhappy creatures may resort when the diseases of incontinence seize on them ; but if they obtain a cure, to what are they reduced ? either to return with the small remains of beauty to their former guilt, or perish in the streets with nakedness and hunger.

“ How frequently have the gay and thoughtless in their evening frolics, seen a band of these miserable females covered with rags, shivering with cold, and pining with hunger ; and, without either pitying their calamities or reflecting upon the cruelty of those who perhaps first seduced them by caresses of fondness or magnificence of promises, go on to reduce others to the same wretchedness by the same means ?

“ To stop the increase of this deplorable multitude, is undoubtedly the first and most pressing consideration. To prevent evil is the great end of Government ; the end for which vigilance and severity are properly employed ; but surely those whom passion or interest have already depraved have some claim to compassion from beings equally frail and fallible with themselves. *Nor will they long groan in their present afflictions, if none were to refuse them relief, but those that owe their exemption from the same distress only to their wisdom and their virtue.*” *Rambler*, vol. iii. No. 107.

See also the pathetic ‘ History of Misella,’ *Rambler*, vol. iv. N^o. 170, 171. And the ‘ Life of Agamus,’ *Adventurer*, No. 86.

While I view the lowering cloud of calamities which gather from various quarters, and burst unexpectedly upon the heads of many dependent and defenceless women, often does there rush into my mind that pathetic language which an ancient writer thus puts into the mouth of a most affectionate and most afflicted father :

“ My sons are men, and wheresoever fortune
May place them, cannot want the means of life,
They shall not burthen you,—But, oh ! my friends !
What will become of my unhappy daughters,
With tenderest care beneath a father’s hand
Cherish’d so long ? Oh, take them to thy arms
Thou best of men.”——

“ In the anguish of *Œdipus* every feeling heart must sympathize when it reflects on the helpless state of females ; and in ages yet unborn it will redound to the honour of many worthy persons among ourselves to have undertaken that merciful and momentous task which *Creon* was called upon to perform.”——

— “ The interests [of women] are more deeply wounded than our own by capricious and froward employers, and their reputation is blasted more fatally by the unprovoked and unrelenting slanderer.”——

— “ Even when they preserve their virtue in an unmarried state, it frequently is difficult for the most submissive to fall in with the whims, or crouch under the insults of their masters ; and when they are excluded from servitude, the most industrious cannot always shelter themselves by honest expedients from the sharpest stings of grief, and the keenest cravings of hunger. Against many of these evils [the advantage of a good education] can alone furnish them with resources ; and if the want of those resources should drive them to snatch a precarious and disgraceful support in the wages of prostitution, their distresses, unpitied as they are, and even justified—yes, I must add, too severely unpitied, and too indiscriminately justified—will baffle all description.”—

— “ What are the enormities and calamities thus [proposed to be] prevented ? The loss of innocence and reputation, the most inveterate habits of laziness and vice, the loathsomeness and torments of disease, the inability to escape from the taunts of monsters, by whom they are first betrayed and then insulted, the forfeiture of protection from the world’s law, the despair of receiving one transient look of compassion, one solitary offer of succour, one tribute of a passing sigh, which the heart at the sight of woe involuntarily sends up to heaven ; of receiving them, I say, not merely from the churlish and venomous misanthrope, or the reserved and fastidious matron, or

the unthinking and unfeeling youth of either sex, but even from those sweet and gentle natures whose tears on other occasions gush out abundantly at the first view, nay at the bare recital of much blacker crimes accompanied with much lighter woe.”—

— “To the hard, the very hard situation of these wretches—but why do I call them so? they have not had the same virtuous education with you and with myself; but they have the same understanding, the same feelings, the same Redeemer, and the same Creator: I will correct myself, and say, to the hard situation of these poor women I often bend my sad and serious thoughts; nor do I ever suffer myself to speak of them no merely with the undistinguishing barbarity of vulgar minds, but even with that severity which is thought by some well-meaning persons a necessary tribute to the cause of religion.”—

— “Even the just abhorrence of a Christian should be mingled with tenderness, and corrected by comprehensive views of circumstantial palliation, where it is to be found. We should recollect that they who are now tainted by the last dregs of pollution were once spotless: that, goaded by perpetual indignities from the vilest and the lowest herd, they have gradually become callous to all shame: that, being abandoned by others, they at last despaired of themselves; and that, unaccustomed to meet with favour that might soften

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or with counsel that might reclaim them, they lost the power of valuing, with the expectation of receiving, either favour or counsel. This method of considering the subject is wise and virtuous. It is wise, because by proportioning our disapprobation to the real turpitude of crimes, we cut off every flattering hope of impunity in the imagination of those who are yet uncorrupted; we make our reproaches more formidable in proportion as they are more just; and we counteract all the mischievous effects which are produced upon juvenile minds by the disgusting austerity of the prude, and the fascinating levity of the libertine. It is virtuous, because it prevents our breasts from being hardened against that pity which is the loveliest ornament, and, I am not ashamed to say confidently, what I am able to say experimentally, the surest criterion of our own purity."

See Dr. PARR'S "*Discourse on Education, and on the Plans pursued in Charity Schools.*"

I must beg the Doctor's pardon for the injury I have done to the above passages by partial quotation. The best amends I can make to my reader is by recommending to his perusal the whole of that excellent Discourse.

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THE END.

[NOTE to Page 50.]

After enumerating many of the miseries which appear constantly incident to a state of prostitution, I have suggested the building of large Penitentiary Houses as a desirable object, if at any time the contributions should furnish powers for such extensive undertakings. I had before remarked, (with allusion to the Magdalen Charity, an institution not less excellently managed than wisely and piously designed,) that the buildings erected to receive penitents are in nowise proportionate to the multitudes of outcast females who fill the streets, not only of London, but of every great town in the kingdom. Might not the establishment of similar hospitals in some other of our principal cities become an important object of our future consideration?

It occurs to me, that many of the situations of distress above enumerated being peculiarly within the scope of the Magdalen Charity, it may seem, to some of my readers, that the Society I wish to see established will not differ, in respect to its object, from that institution; I think it, therefore, requisite to specify certain cases which claim relief from the good policy as well as the humanity of the public, and which appear to be without the scope, or beyond the reach, of any existing establishment.

1. Girls as yet undebauched, without employment, money, or friends. pp. 51, 52.

2. Women liable to be imprisoned for small debts, in circumstances of peculiar distress.

3. Girls diseased or pregnant, as yet unexposed to public shame, whom private relief and accommodation may save from the mischievous consequences of such exposure or detection.

4. Girls in a state of pregnancy, houseless, friendless, and destitute of every thing.

N. B.—Girls infected with the venereal or any other disease, or in a state of pregnancy, or having infants at the breast, are not (for obvious reasons) admitted into the Magdalen Hospital. The signs of pregnancy render it extremely difficult to procure a place of habitation. They who let lodgings are unwilling to admit the inconvenience attending child-birth into their houses; and fear, besides, the resentment of parish-

officers, if they receive one likely to bring a charge upon the parish. It is, in addition to these hardships, necessary that the lodging should be paid for in advance ; as it has been decided, that a landlord shall not be allowed to recover, by an action at law, the rent of lodgings let to a prostitute, and used for the purposes of prostitution. Hence many pass the night in the streets. Several other cases, to which humane assistance may be extended, are suggested in the Essay.

5. Girls fallen from the superior situations of life, doubly distressed because untried in difficulty, hiding themselves in the misery of utmost obscurity, and shrinking with terror from every idea of the publicity of an hospital. Some of these are perhaps married ; some of an age exceeding that which is considered as proper for admission into a penitentiary institution.

In the Preface to the " Rules and Regulations of the Magdalen Charity," it is stated as a difficulty arising from the nature of that Charity, that " women who prove worthy of it do, for that very reason, conceal themselves from public view." The attention to privacy, and the general spirit of tenderness toward the objects of that Charity which appears throughout those Regulations, cannot be sufficiently commended. " Reproaches for past irregularities are forbidden ; no enquiry into names or family is permitted ; but all possible discouragement given to the making any discovery which the parties themselves do not approve." P. 21. Date of the edition 1769

6. Girls in extreme distress, who, from misconduct in (if not in the utmost degree nefarious) or running away from hospitals, &c. or from other circumstances, may not be entitled to the benefit of other Charities.

7. To the above may be added all cases of possible distress, at a time when it shall appear, upon enquiry, that other institutions shall, from a surplus of recommendations, be unable to receive and protect their peculiar objects.

